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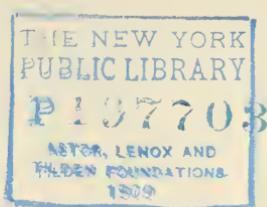
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HISTORICAL SERMON

OF REV. CYRUS CORT, D. D.

In the First Reformed Church of Greensburg
Pa., Sunday Afternoon, October 13, 1907





HISTORICAL SERMON

OF REV. CYRUS CORT, D. D.

In the First Reformed Church of Greensburg,
Pa., October 13, 1907, during the Sessions
of the Pittsburg Synod to Commemorate the
Services of the Pioneer Pastor of the Re-
formed Church in Western Pennsylvania on
the 125th Anniversary.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT.

At the appointed time, Sunday, October 13th, 3 P.M., the Weber Memorial services were held in the First Reformed Church of Greensburg, as arranged by the committee on Religious Services of the Pittsburg Synod. In spite of a dashing rain which came up just as the services were about to begin, and which prevented the attendance of many persons, there was a large audience present.

The opening services were conducted by Rev. A. J. Heller, D. D., and Rev. Jacob F. Snyder. A male quartette, consisting of Rev. Kershner of Punxsutawney, Pa., Rev. E. P. Skyles of Cumberland, Md., E. S. Naly and Asa Mase, sang, "O ! God, Our Help in Ages Past, Our Hope for Years to Come," etc., with fine effect.

At the close of his address Dr. Cort was most heartily congratulated by a large part of the audience, notably by the Rev. Dr. A. L. Yount of the Lutheran Church, and many descendants of father Weber.

Weber Memorial Action of Synod.

At the Monday afternoon session of Pittsburg Synod, the following preamble and resolutions offered by Rev. Cyrus Cort, D. D., were unanimously adopted, viz:

"Whereas to-day, October 14, 1907, is the 125th anniversary of the day on which the representatives of the Reformed Church in Western Pennsylvania had a consultation with Rev. John William Weber and made out a regular call to him to become their pastor, after he had made his preliminary tour among the scattered Reformed people in the territory now covered by the Pittsburg Synod, in the Fall of 1782, therefore,—

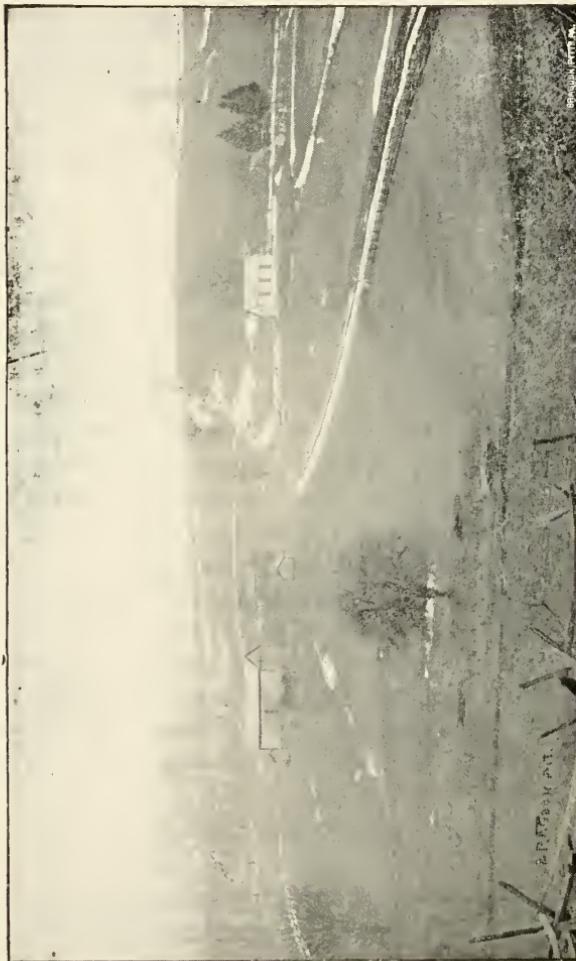
Resolved, by the Pittsburg Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States, convened in annual sessions in the Second Reformed Church of Greensburg, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, that we call to devout and grateful remembrance the arduous and faithful services of Father Weber, as the first regular pastor of the German Reformed Church in Western Pennsylvania, including the Smithfield Street congregation of Pittsburgh, and we recommend the pastors and consistories of the congregations, belonging to this Synod, to hold Weber Memorial Services, at the earliest practicable date, before the next annual meeting of the Classes.

Resolved, That a collection be taken up at these congregational Memorial Services which shall be sent to the treasurer of the Pittsburg Synod to be invested in a church extension fund to be known as the "Rev. John William Weber Church Extension Fund."

The following resolutions were afterward offered

by Elder P. W. Siebert, of Pittsburg, and unanimously adopted also, viz:

Resolved, that this Synod extend thanks to Rev. Cyrus Cort, D. D., for his valuable historical address,



Milliron Farm purchased by Rev. Weber and bequeathed to the Reformed Church.
The small building to the right is the Chapel in which
services are held occasionally.

on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the beginning of the ministry of Rev. John William Weber, in the Western part of Pennsylvania.

Resolved that two thousand (2,000) copies of the address be printed and distributed among the congregations of the Synod, that our people may become better acquainted with our history and do more liberal things for the promotion of the Weber Memorial fund.

Resolved that the publication of this address be referred to Rev. Dr. Cort, and elders E. S. Naly and William R. Barnhart.

On motion the name of Elder Siebert was added to the committee of publication.

The committee on Publication will send a copy of the Weber Memorial Address, and the action of Synod, to all the pastors of the Pittsburg Synod, with the earnest request that prompt attention shall be given to the holding of Memorial Services and taking up a collection for the Weber Church Extension Fund.

Pastors and Consistories are also earnestly requested to secure subscriptions for the Weber Memorial Pamphlet at the rate of twenty-five cents per copy, and send the same to Edwin S. Naly of Greensburg, Pa., who will forward the number of copies ordered for distribution. The proceeds will be devoted to the Weber Church Extension Fund.



HISTORICAL SERMON

OF REV. CYRUS CORT, D. D.

In the First Reformed Church of Greensburg, Pa., October 13, 1907, during the sessions of the Pittsburgh Synod, to commemorate the services of Rev. John William Weber, pioneer pastor of the Reformed Church in Western Pennsylvania.

Deuteronomy 32:7—"Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations; ask thy father and he will shew thee; thy elders and they will tell thee."



Weber Memorial Chapel.

For several months past the Christian people of this land have been studying the character and career of Moses, the great leader and lawgiver of Israel. As the

mighty pyramids of Egypt, where he was brought up, tower above the sandy plain, so this mighty man of God towers above ordinary mortals. He was indeed

“Like some tall cliff that rears its noble form,
Swell from the vale and midway meets the storm
Though gathering clouds around him spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on his head.”

Not only the children of Abraham, according to the flesh, have devoutly cherished his memory and teachings for one hundred generations, or thirty-three centuries; not only does Moses stand the highest in the temple of Jewish fame; two hundred million Mohammedans and four hundred million Christians, all the leading historic tribes of humanity delight to do him honor. And well they may. Moses was not only mighty in word and deed and learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, then the foremost people on the face of the earth in all the elements of civilization and human learning, he was also the meekest of all men on the face of the earth. He was preeminently a providential man, with whom the great Jehovah spoke face to face familiarly as a man speaks to his friend. He was especially equipped by the Almighty with natural and spiritual endowments for the wondrous mission to which he was called.

He had the courage of his convictions and was true to the high behests of an enlightened conscience. He chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, his enslaved and downtrodden people; than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season among the princes of the realm. And why was he able to act thus amid the greatest of earth's allurments? He endured as seeing Him who is invisible, he had the true vision of things eternal and abiding, esteeming the reproach of the Messiah greater riches than all the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward, the final everlasting outcome.

Out of a motley mass of a couple million, obstinate, ungrateful slaves he organized an invincible army and



WEBER MONUMENT ON MILLIRON FARM

created a nation, the most wonderful in human history with laws and institutions that form the basis of all jurisprudence and legislation among civilized men today.

"He was the bravest warrior that ever buckled
sword,

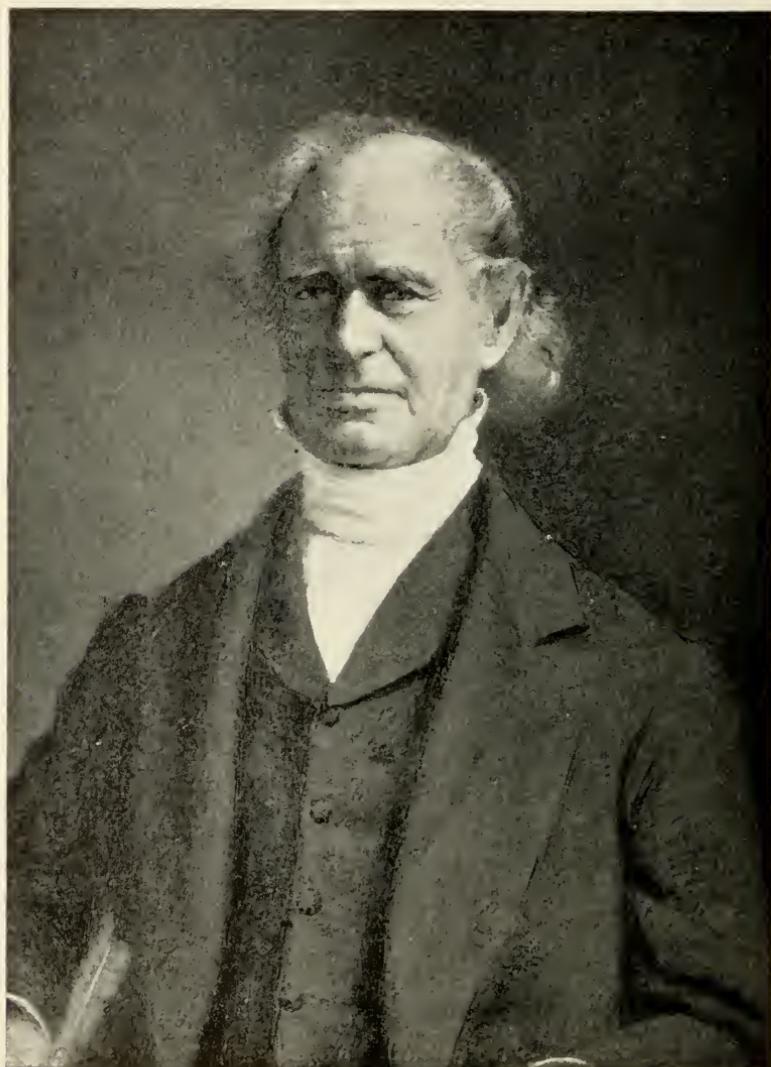
He was the grandest poet that ever breathed a word,
And never earth's philosopher traced with his golden
pen,

On the deathless page, truths half so sage,
As he wrote down for men."

My text contains the leading sentiment and exhortation in the farewell address, or swan song of Moses, as he was about to leave the scenes of earth, with eye undimmed and natural force unabated. He recounts the gracious dealings of the great Jehovah, the covenant God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob with them and their fathers during the past forty eventful years and by the hope of greatest good and fear of direst evil he entreats them to walk faithfully in the path of God's commandments. And the precious truths of divine revelation which he had given them, as the commissioned servant of the most high God, they are to teach diligently unto their children as the chief business and all absorbing employment of their lives. The keynote of all his prophetic and poetic farewell injunctions we have in our text, "Remember the days of old, etc." What the commandment, "honor thy father and mother" the first commandment with promise is to individuals, that this exhortation is to the Hebrew nation, and to all organized communities in church and state throughout all ages. It is the conditional guarantee of long life and true prosperity in the continued enjoyment of the favor and protection of the mighty God of Israel who led his covenant people out of bondage, fed them forty years in the waste howling wilderness and brought them to the land flowing with milk and honey, as he had promised their forefathers centuries before.

To cultivate a devout historical spirit is the sacred duty of all the children of men.

It is one of the main elements of true progress and



REV. N. P. HACKE, D. D.
Pastor of First Church, Greensburg, for 58 years

safety. It raises man above the beasts that perish and the untutored savages whose lives are like water spilled on the ground with nothing in them of help and inspiration for future generations.

In this spirit of grateful remembrance for what God has done for us and our Reformed fathers and mothers in Western Pennsylvania through the toils and privations of John William Weber, the first missionary pastor who settled among our pioneer ancestors, we would engage in the memorial services of this hour. It is a religious duty enjoined as we have seen by the great leader and lawgiver of ancient Israel, to recall and remember the deeds of those who have laid the foundations of church and state. John William Weber stands related to the Reformed church in Western Pennsylvania, now under the jurisdiction of the Pittsburg synod, very much as Michael Schlatter stands related to the entire Reformed church in these United States. He was not the first Reformed minister who preached the Gospel west of the Alleghenies. Just as there were congregations of Reformed people in eastern Pennsylvania, Maryland and the Valley of Virginia, before Schlatter came across the Atlantic in 1746, so there were Reformed settlements or congregations in Westmoreland county, which then included nearly all the bounds of this Synod, before the arrival of Weber in 1782.

John Conrad Bucher, a German Swiss officer in the Royal American regiment of Col. Henry Bouquet, preached over a large part of this region immediately after his license by the Reformed Coetus in 1764, or 143 years ago, and on up to 1768. He officiated at Fort Ligonier, Fort Pitt and no doubt in the other parts of Westmoreland, Washington and Fayette counties visited by Weber on his first trip in September and October 1782 —125 years ago.

At the regular annual meeting of the German Reformed Coetus, or Synod, in Reading, Pa., May 1, 1782, a petition was received from a congregation in West-



Union Reformed and Lutheran Church, Greensburg.
Built in 1815-19.

moreland county which then included Fort Pitt, asking for an able minister to whom it promised 80 pounds or nearly \$400, annually and other necessaries of life. Mr. Weber having shown an inclination for this congregation we are told "the Rev. Coetus resolved to recommend him so that he may receive a regular call to that place." In the record of Coetus proceedings the following year at Philadelphia, in May, 1783, we are told that Dominie Weber took charge of the congregation which called him at the last Coetus, namely Fort Pitt, Hannastown, Hempfield and Mt. Pleasant, in Westmoreland county, Pa. This would indicate that while one particular congregation may have petitioned Coetus the previous year there were a number of congregations in Western Pennsylvania then existing which he was expected to serve and did serve. His address, or the name of his charge was given as Pittsburg in the Coetus minutes for 1785 and 1786. He was reported as present at the meetings of Coetus at Reading, Pa., April 23, 1788. A few months later, June 18, 1788, the deed for the two lots on Smithfield street, Pittsburg, was granted by the heirs of William Penn and acknowledged before the court of Common Pleas in Philadelphia, Pa., next day, June 19, 1788. No doubt Rev. Weber was largely instrumental in securing this donation from John Penn, et al., for the benefit of German people in Pittsburg during his visit east in 1788. Owing to the great distance Father Weber rarely attended the meetings of Coetus east of the mountains. It is interesting to note that he was present at the meeting in Lancaster, in June, 1787, when members of Coetus took part in the dedication of the German high school known as Franklin college. He also attended the meeting in 1791, two years before the Coetus became independent of the Church of Holland in 1793, which had been a fostering mother of the German Reformed Church in America for many years.

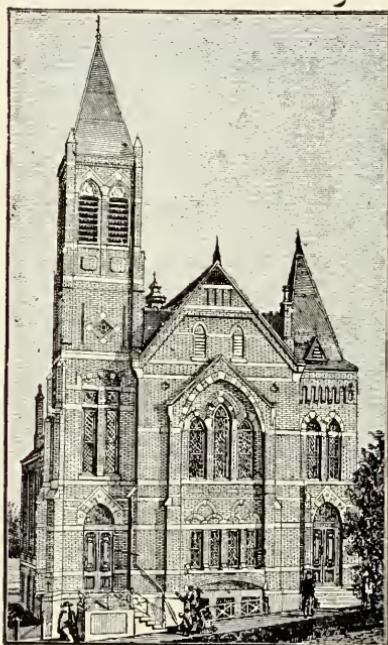
The baptismal record of Rev. Weber written in German, was recently rescued from a rubbish heap by



Rev. C. R. Dieffenbacher, D.D.
Pastor of First Church, Greensburg, for 22 years

Pastor Bromer of the First Reformed church of Greensburg. It contains the following introductory statement copied by Dr. Harbaugh in the second volume of his Reformed Church Fathers page 211, etc.: "In the year 1782, I was sent to Westmoreland county, Pa., to visit the congregations there and privilege was given me to become their pastor if they should call me. I arrived on the ground in September of that year; preached in all the congregations in Westmoreland County, Pa., on to Pittsburg, and afterwards in Washington and Fayette counties; returning again to Westmoreland county on the 14th of October. Four men as elders and deacons, came to meet me in the house of Mr. Thomas and requested me to accept the call to come and labor among them. I believed sincerely that it was my duty to accept this call and to remove to them with my family. The question then arose how much salary was necessary to support me? I told them they knew best what would be required in the circumstances. Whereupon they consulted together alone, returned to me and offered me 116 pounds in money, (or about \$575) one hundred bushels of wheat, a free house and firewood annually. In the beginning of June, 1783, I removed with my family to Westmoreland county. No one, however, had concerned himself in providing me with a dwelling except one Gerhart Thomas, who had rented an old house into which I moved; but it was so open and exposed, that I and my family almost perished from cold during the winter. At length spring came and I was forced to leave the old house and knew of no other into which I could move. I proposed that they should buy one hundred acres of land on which to make myself a home. This could not be done though land was cheap. I then proposed that they should buy it for me, and appoint men who should receive my salary as it became due, and pay for the land, giving me only what was over of my salary when the land should be paid for. The men were appointed but they did not carry out my

wish. Then I bought it myself, and thus got into debt; paid 100 pounds, of which I had to borrow 60 pounds, as the first payment; after which I was to pay 50 pounds a year. My salary, not having been paid regularly, I could not make up the payments as they became due. I labored hard to get out of debt, rode from forty to fifty miles to preach to destitute congregations, on week



First Reformed Church, Greensburg, Pa.

days, with a view to increase my income that I might get out of debt. When at home, I labored with my children, to maintain my family from the land. Thus I continued eighteen years before I was out of debt and had my land free." Such is the record of the congregational archives of the First church of Greensburg.

This Church was founded in 1796 by father Weber out of members belonging chiefly to the Harrold congrega-

gation. Nineteen members were present at the first communion on April 22, 1796. Among them were two of the Drum family, 4 Turneys, 4 Barnharts, Michael Truby, et al.

At the end of seven years the Brush Creek congregation owed Rev. Weber about \$250. The Hempfield, or Harrold's, about \$275 and Mt. Pleasant (or St. Paul's near Pleasant Unity) about \$80. Those were hard times financially on the frontier. Rev. Weber complained to the Coetus, or Synod, which wrote to the congregation



Rev. E. S. Bromer, D. D.
Present Pastor First Church, Greensburg

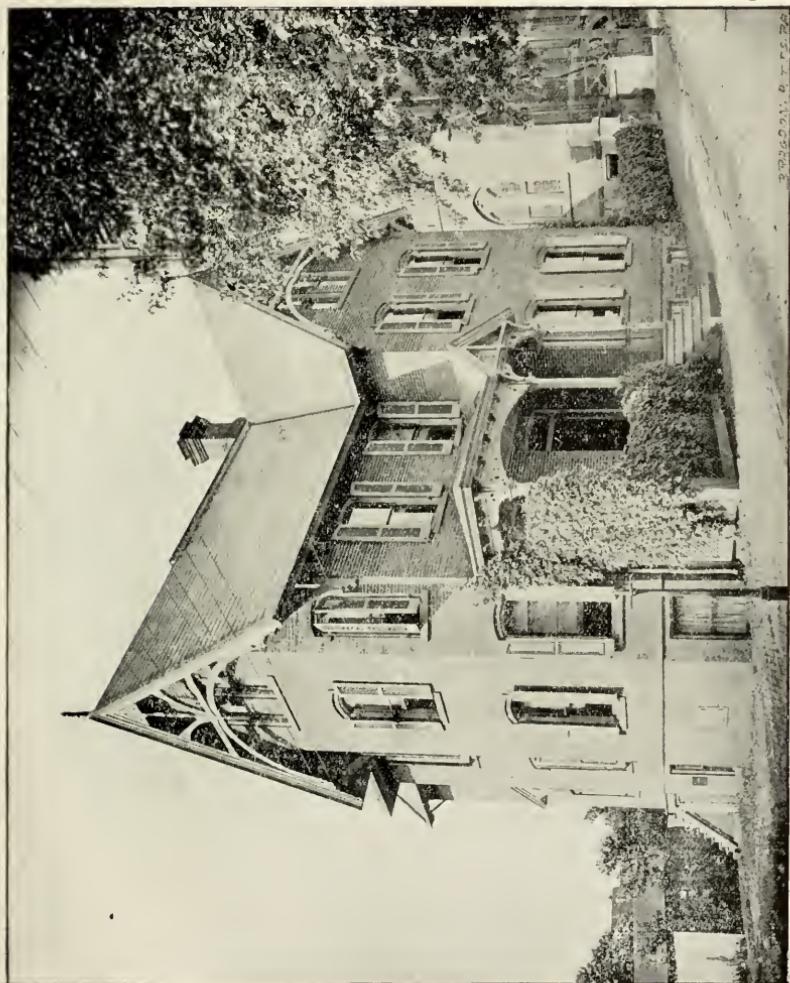
exhorting them to pay the pastor his back standing dues, for if he should leave them they would find it difficult to procure another. They now newly subscribed his call and renewed their obligations for his salary; but the amounts paid him became less from year to year, so that at last he only received about \$400. He complains that in his old age, after forty-two years in the ministry, he has been treated to great injustice and ingratitude; that he has been slandered and persecuted. But he feels that it is his duty to remain at his post and to trust in

the providence of God which will sustain him in his old age. When he first arrived in Western Pennsylvania, we are told, that he preached to four congregations, one in Pittsburg, two in Hempfield township, namely Brush Creek and Harrolds, and one in Mt. Pleasant township, afterward known as the Ridge or St. Paul's church, near Pleasant Unity. There being no other German Re-



Rev. S. L. Krebs.
Pastor First Church, Greensburg, 1901-1906

formed minister in all that region he visited all the infant congregations in Allegheny, Washington and Fayette counties. The Berlin, Somerset county, congregation records show that he also preached to "our Reformed people" there previous to the arrival of the ill-fated Spangenberg. The letter received from one of his grandsons in Pueblo, Col., a few days ago says "Father Weber extended his missionary labors into Ohio and

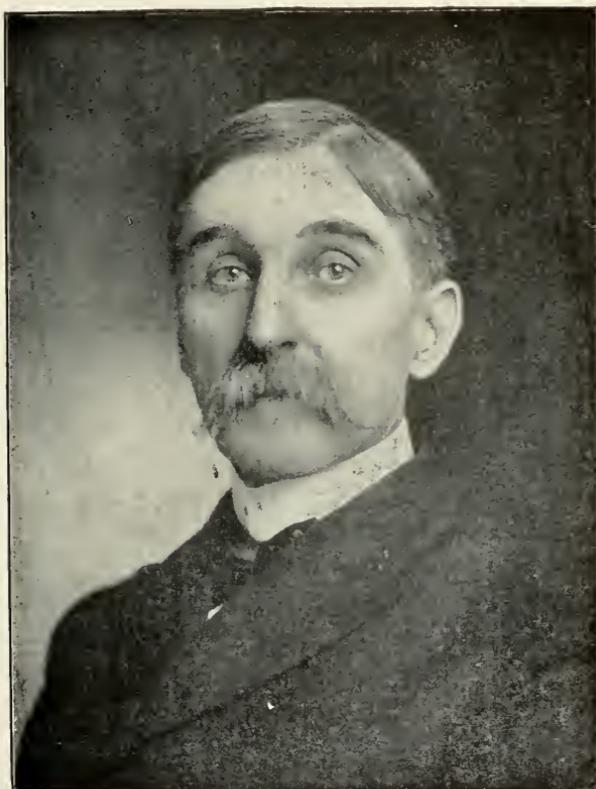


First Reformed Parsonage, Greensburg, Pa.

Virginia." Even in the last years he was inspired to enlarge the bounds of his beloved Reformed Church. He made journeys to adjacent new counties of Butler, Armstrong, Venango and Crawford, and in fact he missionated all over the bounds of the Pittsburg Synod as at present constituted; and to regions beyond. He served Reformed congregations or settlements in Washington and Fayette counties which have long since become extinct because of a lack of ministers and perhaps of missionary zeal on the part of some of his successors. He was faithful in the instruction of the baptized children of the church, in the doctrines of the Heidelberg catechism to which he solemnly affirmed unalterable devotion "in heart and soul" when he united with the Coetus in accordance with the rule adopted by that body at its second annual meeting in Philadelphia, Sept. 28, 1748.

Sometimes the catechetical exercises were held outside of the uncomfortable churches, or school houses, in cold weather where the catechumens built brush heap fires to keep themselves warm. In meeting appointments, whether on foot or on horseback, we are told Father Weber usually went armed with musket or horse pistol. It was a period of peculiar danger and hardship to the pioneer settlers. In August of the previous year, 1781, Col. Archibald Lochry, the prothonotary and lieutenant of Westmoreland county, a man of worth and distinction, in command of 107 picked citizens of Westmoreland county fell into an Indian ambush, a short distance below the mouth of the Miami river, when on their way down the Ohio to join the expedition of the heroic George Rogers Clark, the conqueror of the Northwest. Only one or two escaped destruction at the hands of the wily and blood thirsty savages. The rest were all slain including Lochry and Capt. Stokely, with his company of Rangers. Coupled with this was the ill-fated expedition of Col. William Crawford to Sandusky, which met with terrible disaster, ending in the burning of the com-

mander and his son at the stake in Ohio by the Shawnee Indians. Then came the raid of Indians and Tories upon the county seat of Westmoreland, July 13, 1782, when Hannastown was destroyed and a large number of settlers slain or carried away into captivity in Canada. Only

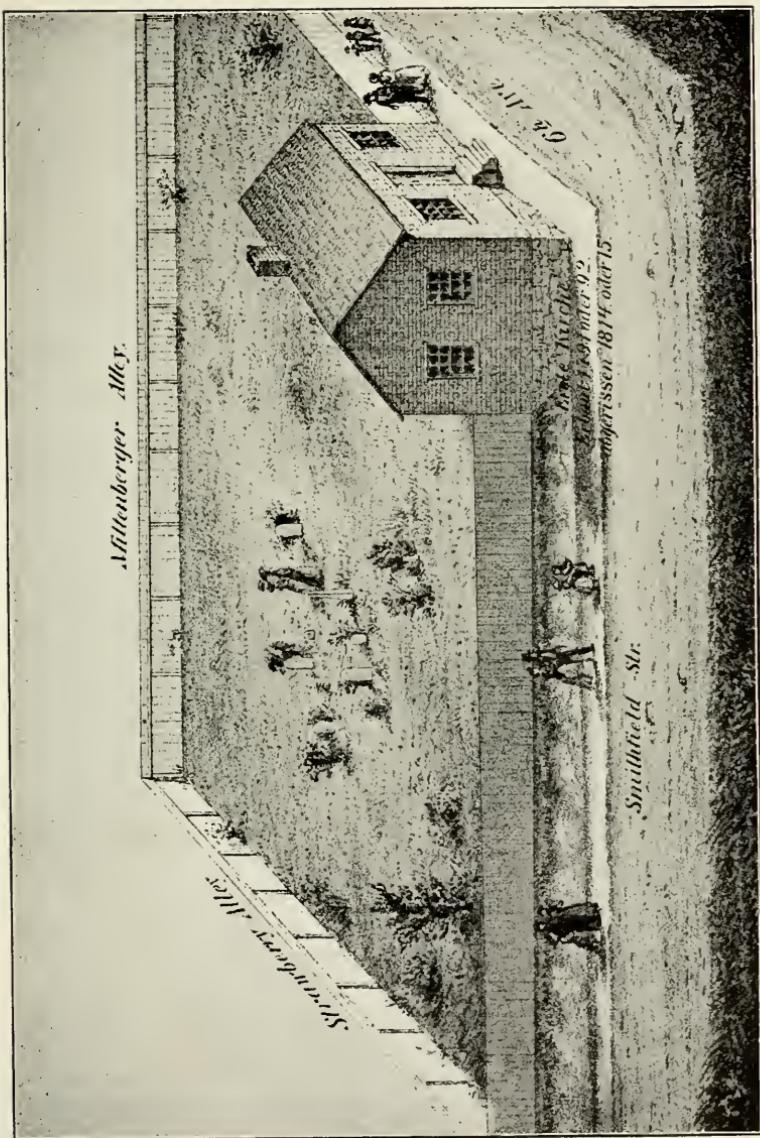


REV. S. B. MASE, D. D.,
Pastor Second Reformed Church, Greensburg, Pa.

a couple of months before Father Weber made his first missionary tour to Western Pennsylvania in September and October, 1782, these dreadful calamities took place. It required great physical and moral courage to face such perils. Exactly three weeks before the attack upon

Hannastown a petition was sent to Gen. William Irvine, commander of Fort Pitt, by the frontier inhabitants of Brush Creek, entreating him to furnish a guard of Continental troops to protect them against the scalping knife of the Indian savages while they sought to gather in their grain, greatly needed to save them from starvation.

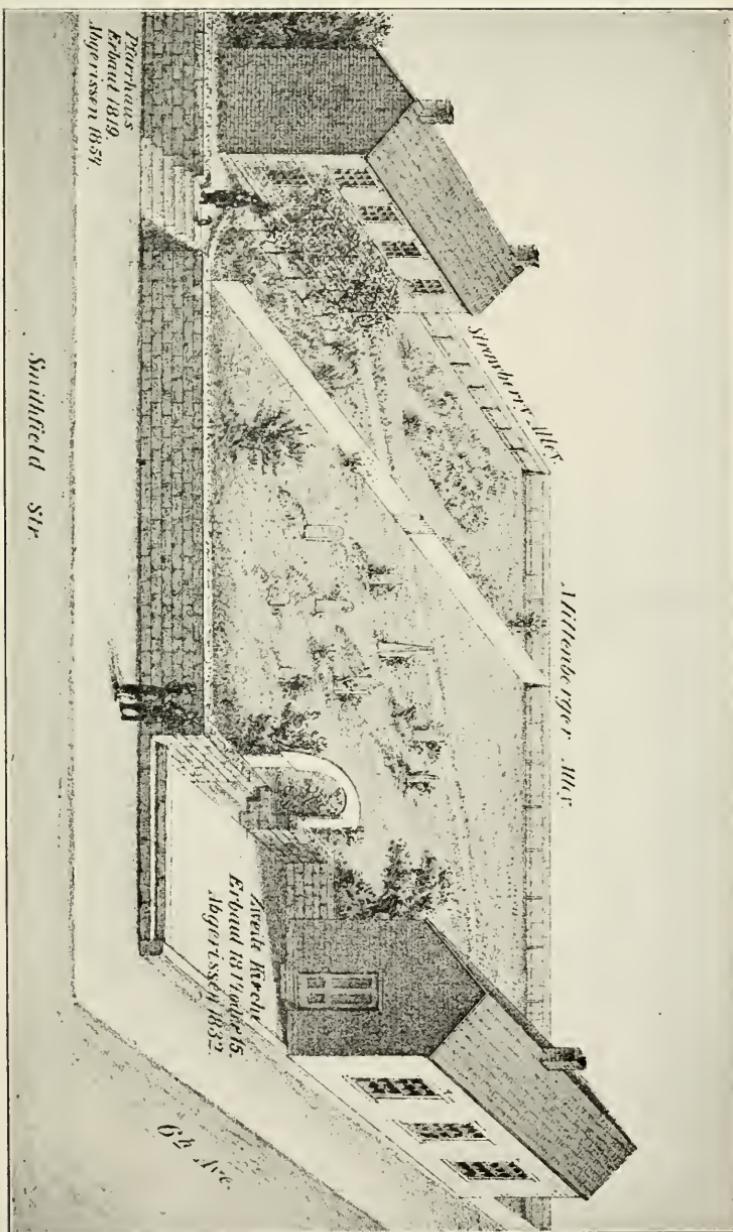
Troops, they stated, were sorely needed to guard their working parties in the harvest field and their families in their homes and block houses; for, past experience surely indicated that the success of the savages against Crawford's forces would embolden them to make renewed excursions against the frontier settlements. The petition, says Butterfield, the historian, was elegant in diction, clear and strong in statement, and written in a bold and beautiful hand. The signers were nearly all Westmoreland ancestors of families, represented in this memorial assemblage. Among them were three of the Walthours, two Studebakers, Frederick Willard, Michael and Jacob Byerly, John Kemerer, two Lautzenheisers, Whitehead and Schneider. They seemed to have a premonition of the coming storm. The petition was dated at Brush Creek June 22, 1782. When the brutal marauders came, July 13, only three weeks later, in the midst of harvest my great great grandmother Byerly, rode thirty miles through the frontier settlements to warn the people of their danger so they could flee to Fort Walther, Fort Marchand and other places of comparative safety. So they were exposed continually to marauders up until the decisive victory of General Wayne in 1794. The previous disastrous campaigns of Harmer and St. Clair only increased the fury and opportunity of the savages to assail the border settlements. The close of the Seven Years War of Independence brought peace and tranquility to the eastern part of our country, but long and dreary years elapsed before the pioneer settler of western Pennsylvania could toil in safety amid the primeval forests that covered the virgin soil of old Westmore-



Church erected by Rev. Weber at Fort Pitt, 1793, on Smithfield Street lots 455, and 456.

land. As Rev. Hableston, the successor of Father Weber, stated, the traditional remark of the early settlers and fathers of our Reformed church was that "Mr. Weber was truly a man who sowed in tears." Like most of the earnest and aggressive leaders in church and state, he created antagonism and was misrepresented in his own day and generation.

A few words now in regard to the personal history and character of John William Weber. He was born in the Province of Wittegenstein, Germany, March 5, 1735. He was a schoolmaster in the Fatherland and came to America in 1764. Rev. Ruoff in his German history of the Smithfield street congregation states that Rev. Weber taught school in eastern Pennsylvania to pay for the passage of himself and wife to America and to make a living for himself and family. This must be a mistake and a mere inference arising from a frequent practice of emigrants of those days selling their labor as redemptioners for several years to secure passage to America, and thus escape from religious and military despotism in the Old World. The Covodes, the Harmons and many other Pennsylvania German families were descended from such redemptioner ancestors. But there is nothing on record elsewhere to indicate that Mr. Weber belonged to that class. On the contrary he was married to Maria Agnes Born, a native of Baden Baden, Germany, Oct. 5, 1776, or three years and a half after his arrival in America. She died July 25, 1784, in Westmoreland county. He afterward married Anna Maria Robinson, July 25, 1785, and had in all eighteen children. The Coetal minutes of the Reformed church state that as a schoolmaster he appeared before that body in 1771. He was examined and authorized to preach to vacant congregations and catechize the children. He secured vacant congregations in what is now Monroe county, Pa., The Coetus held in Lancaster, Pa., June 17, 1772, appointed Revs. Weyberg, Faber, Gross and Pomp, a committee to examine Mr.



PARSONAGE—Built 1819, razed 1851.

SMITHFIELD STREET CHURCH

SECOND CHURCH—Built 1814-5, razed 1852

Weber and other candidates and if their examinations were satisfactory to ordain them to the Gospel ministry. The committee examined and ordained the men as we learn from the Coetal proceedings. Rev. Weber became the regular pastor of what was known as the Plainfield charge, which he reports as consisting of 143 families in 1777. The German traveler and historian Schopf, traveled through his charge in August, 1782. He states that Rev. Weber, pastor of the German Reformed people in that region, had incurred the hostility of the people by preaching too much about the war and was obliged to leave. He went to Pittsburg, as Schopf states, where later on he met him in October, 1782, ministering to German people of "different confessions."

The outcome of the war of American Independence and the logic of events seemed to have brought a change over the spirit of the dreams of his Eastern Pennsylvania charge. In June, 1791, a delegate appeared before the meeting of Coetus at Lancaster, Pa., and stated that it was the desire of that congergation to call Dominie Weber as its pastor. This was nine years after he left them to go to Westmoreland. It indicates that after the sober second thought the hearts of the eastern people went back to Father Weber in a way that vindicates his memory as pastor and faithful preacher of the Gospel as well as a zealous patriot.

Such things have frequently happened in our own day and generation. In spite of his toils and privations Father Weber remained at his post on the frontier for thirty-four years and died in a good old age in his eighty-second year on his own farm located on the Sewickley, and afterward owned by Col. Israel Painter. His remains were buried in the Milliron graveyard on the farm which he secured for the exclusive use of the Reformed church forever for school and church purposes. Westmoreland Classis did honor to itself by erecting a suitable monument to his memory at a cost



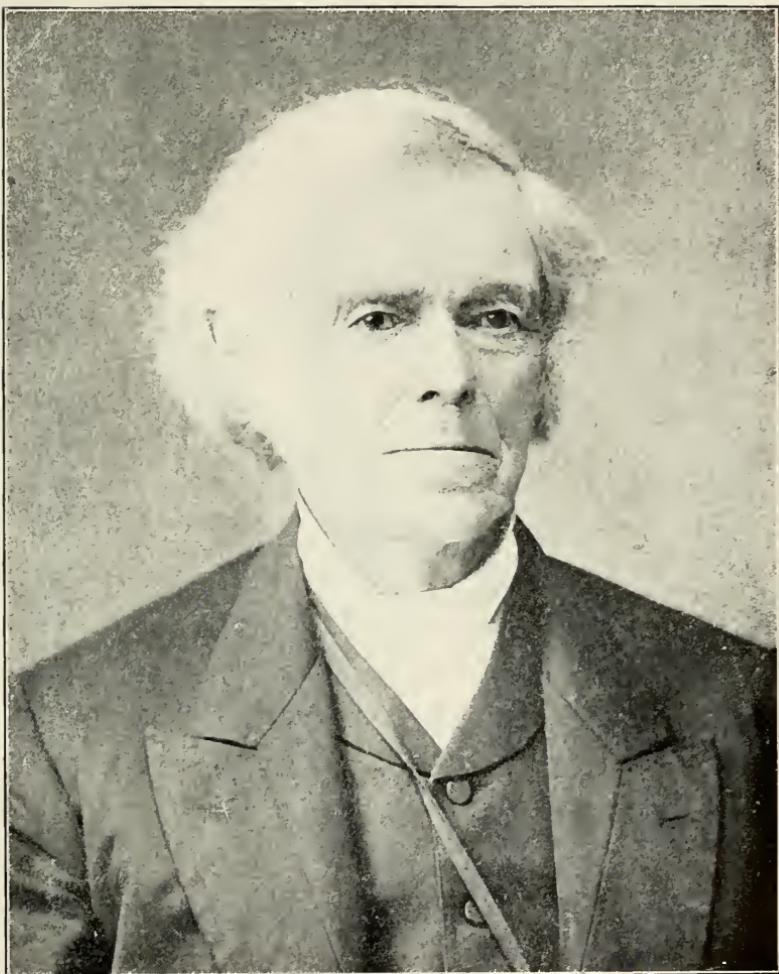
Smithfield Street Church erected by Rev. Dr. Kemerer in 1834 on
sight of First Church built by Father Weber.

of \$450 in 1874 after his last earthly resting place had remained unmarked for fifty-eight years.

Dr. Hacke, Rev. J. W. Love and Elder John Truxal were the committee of Classis to superintend this laudable undertaking which owed its success mainly to the zeal of Rev. Love. "Blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the spirit, they rest from their labors and their works do follow them." After life's fitful fever Father Weber rests in peace with God, along with the brave and true hearted pioneers of old Westmoreland to whom he ministered faithfully and successfully for an entire generation.

I have abstained from extended reference to Father Weber's services as the founder of the Smithfield street church in Pittsburg. As chairman of Synod's committee, appointed a year ago at Greenville, Pa., and which has fully investigated the claim of the Reformed church to lots 455 and 456, I have collected a vast amount of data which cannot be repeated here. Suffice it to say that in their centennial history published by Pastor Ruoff in 1882 and in their elaborate memorial services during the last week of September of this year the Smithfield street people seek to honor the memory of Father Weber as the founder of the congregation in the fall of 1782, or 125 years ago, and as the leading spirit in the erection of the first church built on lots 455 and 456 in 1793.

It was only recently that the terms of that deed by the heirs of William Penn to our Reformed church and another Evangelical society came to the knowledge of our Reformed church authorities. It is due to the memory of Father Weber that the Reformed church shall exhaust all suitable measures to establish its right and title in that valuable property whose income is so much needed to promote the cause of church extension among the large foreign, German and Hungarian population in and around Pittsburg. We, who are enjoying the fruits of his toil and privations in behalf of our grand old Refor-



Rev. Daniel Kemerer, D. D.

mation church, may well pause in the midst of our Synodical proceedings to honor the memory of this pioneer organizer and pastor of our beloved Reformed church in Western Pennsylvania. Tomorrow (October 14) it will be exactly 125 years since the call was made out to Father Weber to become their pastor by the official representatives of the scattered Reformed people in Westmoreland county. As the ministers and lay representatives of 170 Reformed congregations and 25,000 communicant members of the Pittsburg Synod of the Reformed church in the United States, covering the very territory explored by Father Weber, it behooves us to remember the days of old and commune with the heroic pioneer spirits of former generations. It is especially gratifying to me as a native of Westmoreland and a descendant of the first settler on the old Forbes road between Fort Ligonier and Fort Pitt to be able to take part in these memorial services.

Through my veins courses the mingled blood of the Byerlys, the Kemerers, the Turneys and the Corts, pioneer settlers to whom Father Weber ministered in spiritual things in the brave days of old and who stood by him amid evil and good report. Here in old Greensburg, three squares north of this spot, I was born over seventy-three years ago. Two months later I was baptised by Rev. Dr. N. P. Hacke in the old Union Reformed and Lutheran church within a stone's throw of this sanctuary. Here I passed the happy days of childhood. In 1853 I was confirmed by Dr. S. H. Giesy in the Second Reformed church; there I was licensed to preach the gospel by Westmoreland classis in the fall of 1862; or forty-five years ago. There also I was ordained as missionary pastor in May, 1863, to establish the Reformed church at Altoona, Pa., after a preliminary exploration in the fall of 1862 and four months service as licentiate—a work that has developed into four flourishing congregations in the city of the mountains. Very precious and hallowed memories crowd upon me at this hour but none are so



Present Smithfield Street Church.

sacred as the memory of the sainted mother who died 64 years ago, whose grave I visited in the old German cemetery, or Gottes Acker, last evening. She was one of the best and loveliest of women. She led me to the prayer meetings, held weekly at the homes of Daniel Kiehl, Simon Cort and our own home, by the founders of the Second Reformed church of Greensburg, during the ten years of prayerful yearning and waiting that preceded this organization and the tardy introduction of English services in the Reformed congregations of Westmoreland county.

“Long, long be my heart, with such memories filled,
Like a vase in which roses have once been distilled: ,

You may break, you may ruin the vase if you will,
But the scent of the roses will hang 'round it still.”

As I exclaimed in my impromptu address at the Hannastown centennial, July 13, 1882, in reference to the hallowed associations that cluster around my native heath, the green hills of old Westmoreland, formerly fuller of beauty and romance than now when they are begrimed by the smoke and soot of industrial pursuits.

“I've traveled east and I've traveled west,
And I've borne a weary lot,
But in my wanderings far and near,
You never were forgot,
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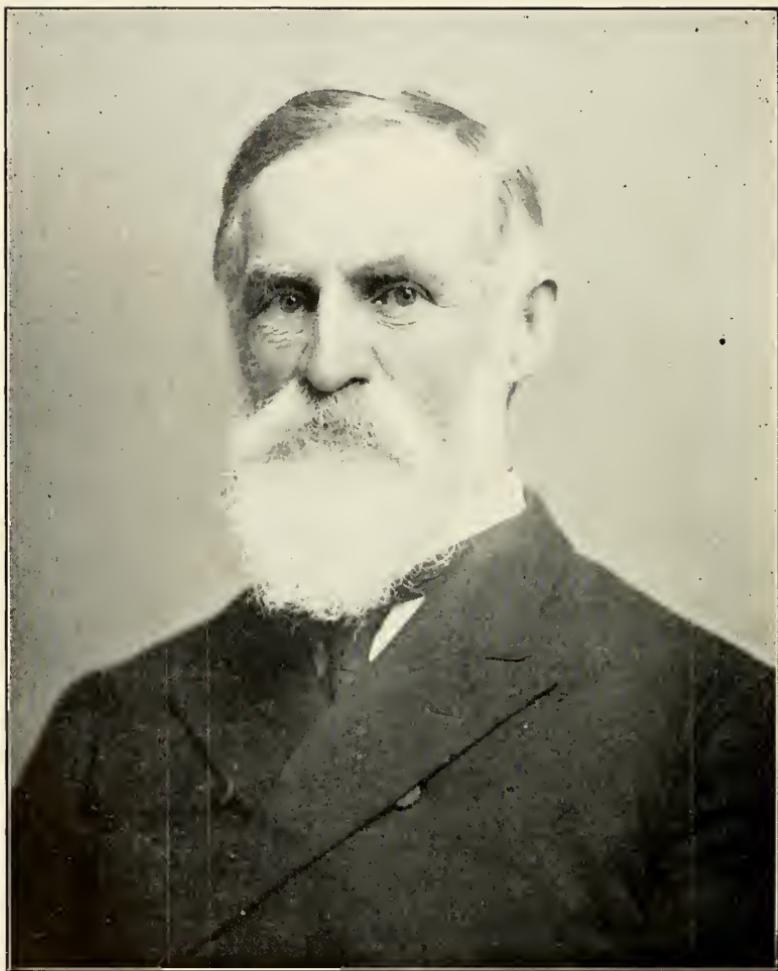
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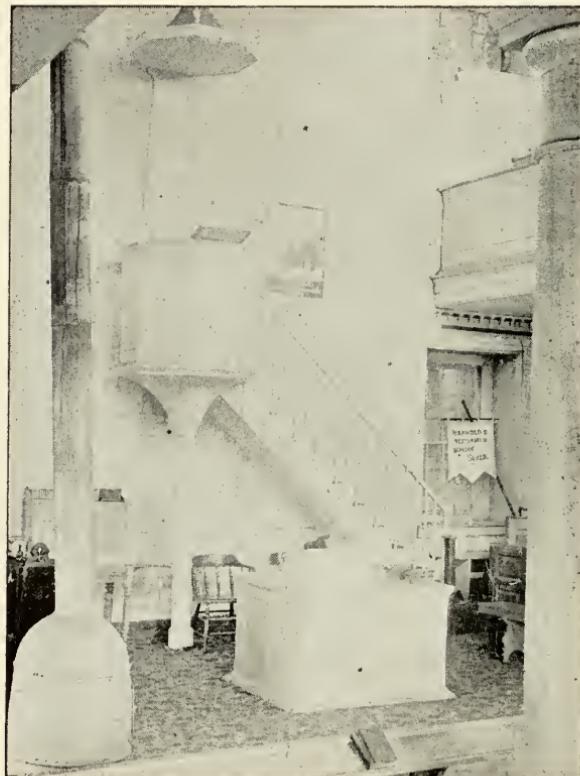
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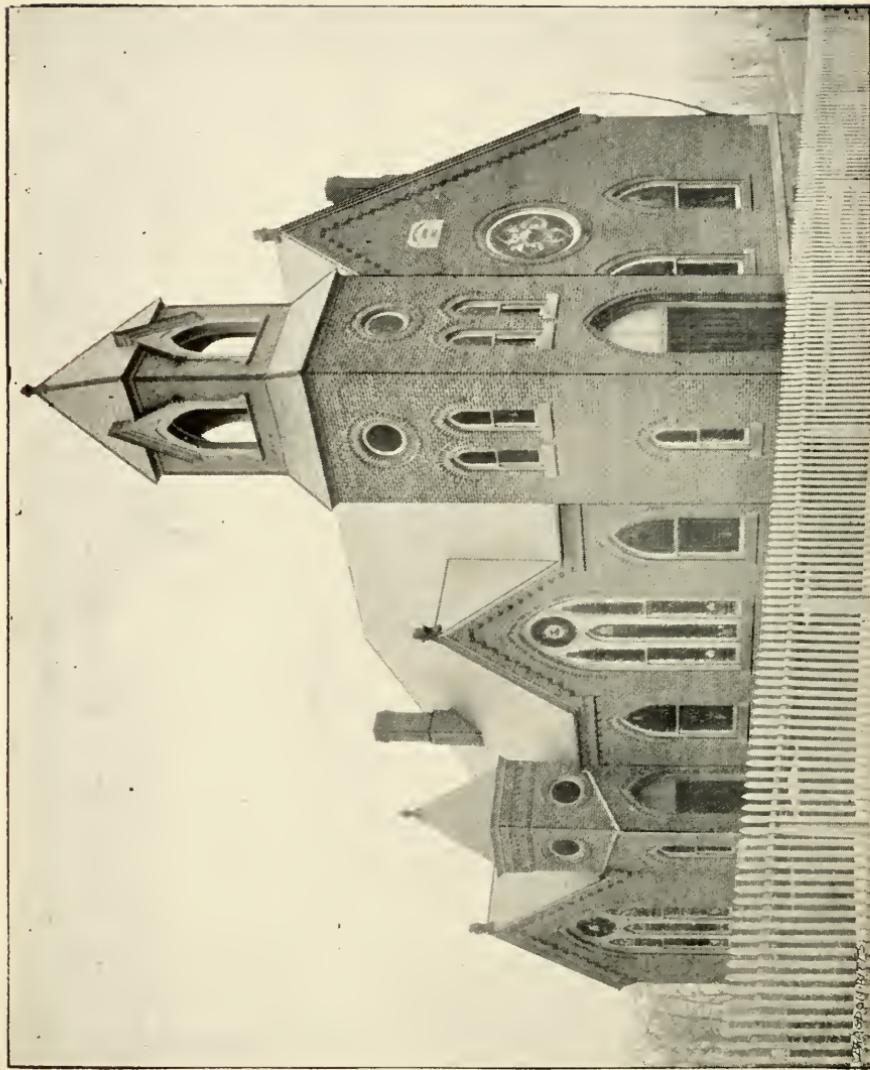
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mation church, may well pause in the midst of our Synodical proceedings to honor the memory of this pioneer organizer and pastor of our beloved Reformed church in Western Pennsylvania. Tomorrow (October 14) it will be exactly 125 years since the call was made out to Father Weber to become their pastor by the official representatives of the scattered Reformed people in Westmoreland county. As the ministers and lay representatives of 170 Reformed congregations and 25,000 communicant members of the Pittsburg Synod of the Reformed church in the United States, covering the very territory explored by Father Weber, it behooves us to remember the days of old and commune with the heroic pioneer spirits of former generations. It is especially gratifying to me as a native of Westmoreland and a descendant of the first settler on the old Forbes road between Fort Ligonier and Fort Pitt to be able to take part in these memorial services.

Through my veins courses the mingled blood of the Byerlys, the Kemerers, the Turneys and the Corts, pioneer settlers to whom Father Weber ministered in spiritual things in the brave days of old and who stood by him amid evil and good report. Here in old Greensburg, three squares north of this spot, I was born over seventy-three years ago. Two months later I was baptised by Rev. Dr. N. P. Hacke in the old Union Reformed and Lutheran church within a stone's throw of this sanctuary. Here I passed the happy days of childhood. In 1853 I was confirmed by Dr. S. H. Giesy in the Second Reformed church; there I was licensed to preach the gospel by Westmoreland classis in the fall of 1862; or forty-five years ago. There also I was ordained as missionary pastor in May, 1863, to establish the Reformed church at Altoona, Pa., after a preliminary exploration in the fall of 1862 and four months service as licentiate—a work that has developed into four flourishing congregations in the city of the mountains. Very precious and hallowed memories crowd upon me at this hour but none are so



Present Smithfield Street Church.

sacred as the memory of the sainted mother who died 64 years ago, whose grave I visited in the old German cemetery, or Gottes Acker, last evening. She was one of the best and loveliest of women. She led me to the prayer meetings, held weekly at the homes of Daniel Kiehl, Simon Cort and our own home, by the founders of the Second Reformed church of Greensburg, during the ten years of prayerful yearning and waiting that preceded this organization and the tardy introduction of English services in the Reformed congregations of Westmoreland county.

“Long, long be my heart, with such memories filled,
Like a vase in which roses have once been distilled; .

You may break, you may ruin the vase if you will,
But the scent of the roses will hang 'round it still.”

As I exclaimed in my impromptu address at the Hannastown centennial, July 13, 1882, in reference to the hallowed associations that cluster around my native heath, the green hills of old Westmoreland, formerly fuller of beauty and romance than now when they are begrimed by the smoke and soot of industrial pursuits.

“I've traveled east and I've traveled west,
And I've borne a weary lot.

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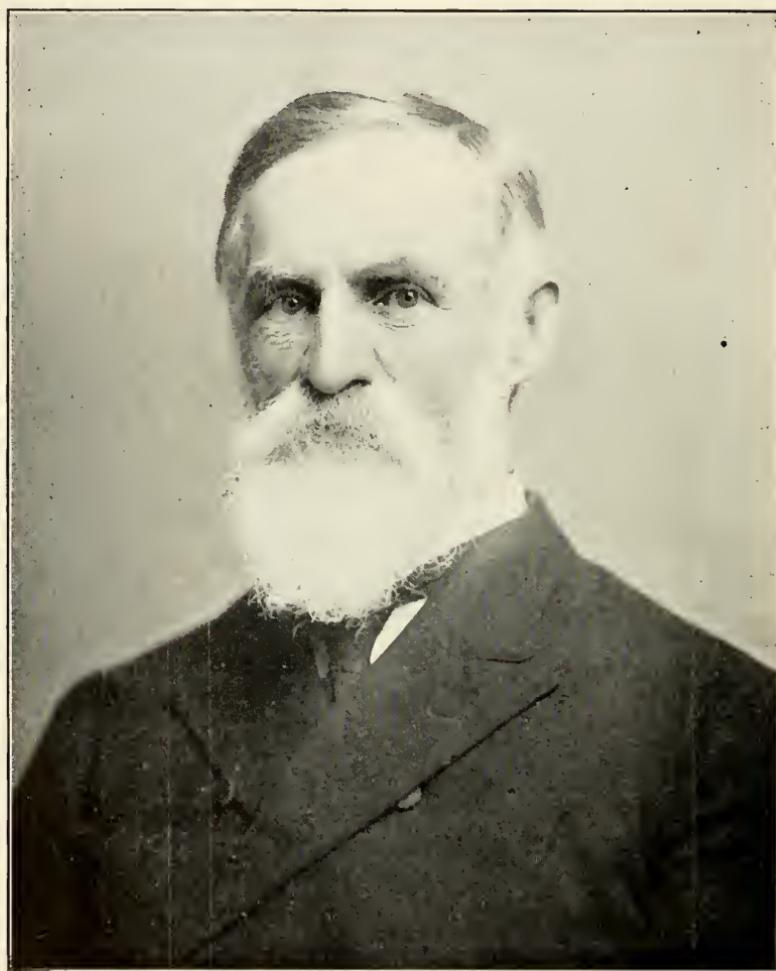
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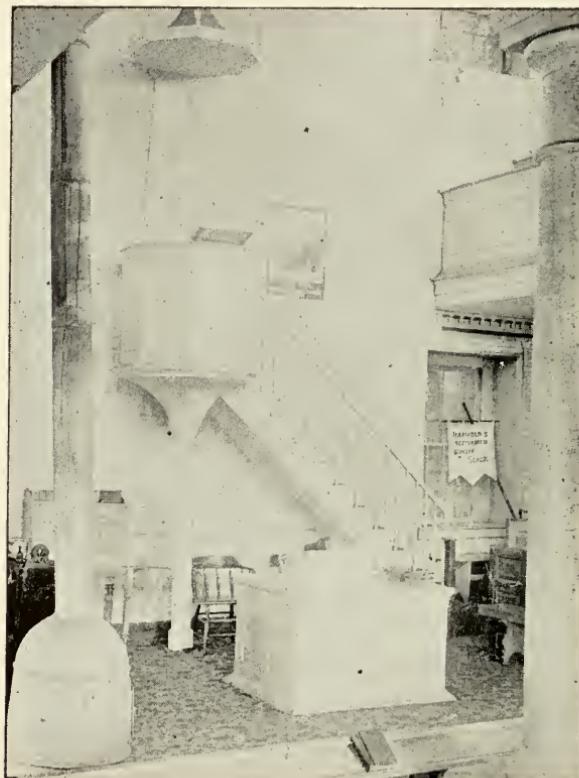
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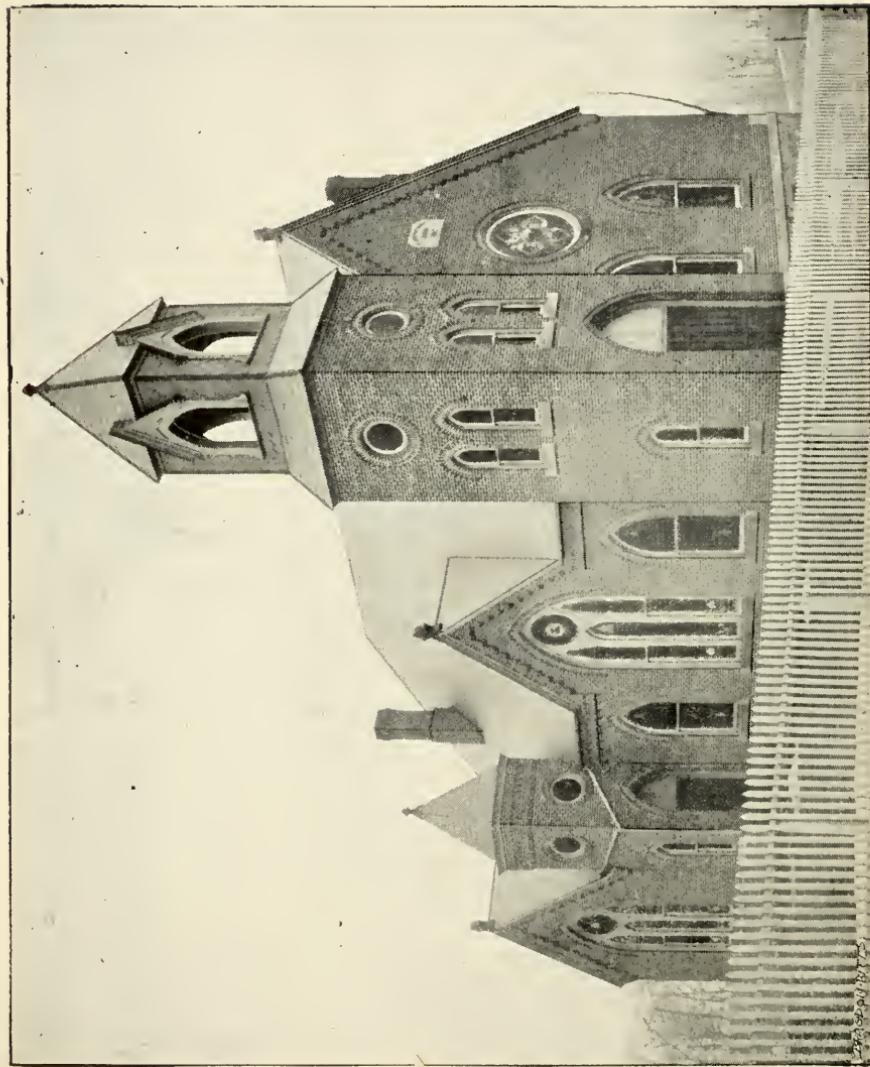
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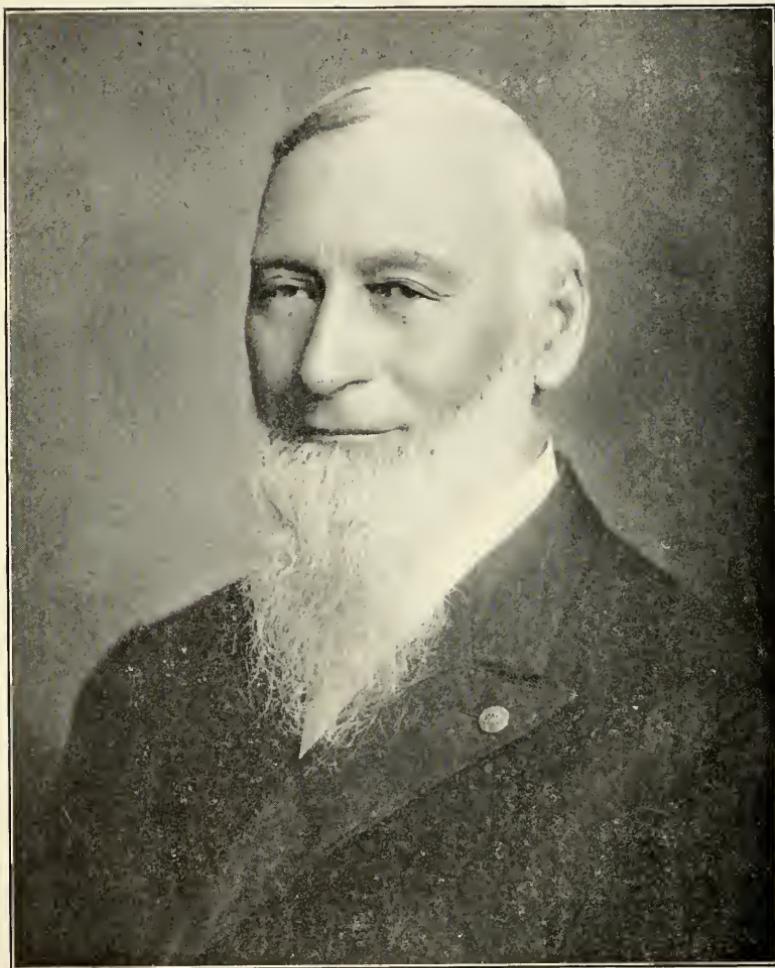
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Church and voices its hope that a closer bond of religious unity and Christian service may be the outcome of the future negotiations between them and the committee of synod.

(4) That the treasurer of synod be directed to pay to the chairman of the committee the sum of twenty-five dollars to cover expenses incurred to date.

The report was signed by Rev. Dr. Cyrus Cort, of Apollo, Pa., R. F. D., Rev. A. J. Collison, of Homestead, Rev. Dr. John H. Prugh, of Pittsburg, and John E. Kunkle, of Greensburg.

P. S.—Dr. Cort's address is now Overlea, Balt. Co., Md.

Private Account and Record Book of John W. Weber.

Recently a private account and record book of Rev. John Wm. Weber was presented to the First Reformed Church by Mr. Jacob G. Weaver, one of his descendants. The fact is duly recorded in the Minute Book of Consistory of 1908. The book is written in German. It was examined by Prof. Wm. J. Hinke, D. D., and found to be of considerable interest. We glean the following facts from his notes.

The book is an account book rather than a diary. Except the entries referring to his family and children it is entirely taken up with financial accounts: first, accounts of his school; second, accounts with his congregation, consisting of annual settlements and subscription lists; third, private accounts of various kinds. purchases in stores, sales of crops, accounts with all kinds of trades people, with his children, etc.

The separate sheets attached to this account book are apparently a sermon or address on watchfulness, concluding with a long poem of about twenty-five verses, probably his composition.



Henry Bouquet



THE OLD BLOCK HOUSE.

At Fort Pitt erected by Col. Bouquet in 1764.

The early pages of the book refer to his life as school master and preacher before he moved to Westmoreland county. The school account of his pupils, etc., begins with October, 1771 and ends with September, 1774.

He refers to his congregation for the first time in the year 1772. In 1771 he is referred to for the first time in the Coetus Minutes (p. 319) as a schoolmaster whose case is laid before the Fathers in Holland. He with four others was examined at the Coetus of 1771, held at Reading, Oct. 9-10, (Minutes, p. 327.) At the Coetus of 1772 they passed a second examination and were licensed (p. 340.) In 1776 Weber is reported as serving the Plainfield charge (p. 353), consisting of Plainfield, Greenwich, Hanolden, Hamilton, Mt. Bethel, (p. 356.)

This receives now a valuable confirmation, and to some extent modification.

His accounts with his congregation in Westmoreland County, as well as his private accounts, are interesting as a revelation of the simplicity and directness of that early frontier life both as to family and church life. The various settlements with his congregations fully confirms his connection with the Reformed people of Fort Pitt, Hendon (Hannastown,) Hempfield and Mt. Pleasant.

The private family records of birth and death add nothing of general interest not hitherto known concerning his life or his family except definiteness of dates in certain instances.

NOTE.

Rev. Dr. Henry Harbaugh tells us in his "Fathers of the Reformed Church," Vol. II, p. 219, that it was the custom of Rev. Weber to spend his birthdays in prayer and fasting, etc. On such occasions he would

record his feelings in verse. Specimens of these for March 5, 1812, 1813, 1814, and 1815 are given and evince poetical merit. The last effusion when he had reached the four score milestone of his earthly pilgrimage reads as follows:



St. Paul's or Ridge Church, Pleasant Unity.
Built by Rev. Weber, 1792.

Unser Leben waehret siebenzig,
Wenn's hoch kommt sind's achtzig Jahren.
Heut leg ich achtzig hinter mich;
Durch Angst, Verflogung, und Gefahr,
Hat mich mein Gott gefuehret.
Des dank ich Ihm von Herzens Grund,
Weil er mich bis auf diese Stund
So gnaedichlich erhalten;
Drum lass ich Ihn nur walten.
Wann mich die Menschen gleich verlassen,
So will ich Jesum fester fassen.
Ich weis er laest mich nimmer nicht,
Er steht mir bei im Tod und im Gericht.

To this is added:

“Meine Grabschift ist folgender Schluszreim.”

Heir ruh ich sanft in Gott,

Kein Feind kann mich hier stoeren.

Ich fuehl nicht mehr des Neides Spott,

Gott woll sie all berkehern.

Nun meine seel preis Gottes Namen,

In alle Ewigkeiten, Amen.



SECOND REFORMED CHURCH
Where Synod Met Authorizing the Weber Memorial Monument



PARSONAGE

FIRST REFORMED CHURCH

EDWARD S. BROMER, MINISTER

Corner Third Street and Maple Avenue

Greensburg, Pa., June 12, 1909.

Mr. Wilberforce Ames, Librarian,
New York Public Library,
New York, N.Y.

Dear Sir, —

As requested, we are mailing you today, under
separate cover, a copy of the Historical Sermon by Dr.
Cort to be entered upon your list in the library.

Very truly yours,



JUL 10 1969

